



Lyn, APF

Shoppers in Vientiane buy meat and vegetables at the city's central market. Their colorful skirts are woven at home.

from Chinese and Russian military advisers and thousands of North Vietnamese troops. The Laotian government was backed by troops from Thailand and South Vietnam, and military advisers from the United States. By 1970, Souvanna Phouma's government troops controlled only western Laos. Pathet Lao forces, led by Souphanouvong, held eastern Laos.

During the Vietnam War, North Vietnam used the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and Cambodia to move troops and supplies into South Vietnam. United States planes bombed the trail and other areas in Laos. In 1971, South Vietnamese troops, supported by U.S. bombers and helicopters, entered Laos to attack Communist supply routes.

In 1973, the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao agreed to a cease-fire and to the formation of a coalition government. A new government was set up in 1974, with Souvanna Phouma as prime minister and Souphanouvong as head of an advisory body. In 1975, pro-Communist demonstrations occurred, and many non-Communist government officials resigned and were replaced by Communists. The government came under Communist domination. At the same time, the Pathet Lao took over large amounts of land.

The Vietnam War ended in April 1975, when South Vietnam fell to the Communists. Communists also won control of Cambodia that month. The Pathet Lao took over Laos in August 1975. In December, they abolished the coalition government and the monarchy and took full control of the government.

DAVID P. CHANDLER

See also LUANG PRABANG; VIENTIANE; SOUTHEAST ASIA; COLOMBO PLAN; MEKONG RIVER; VIETNAM WAR.

LA PAZ, *luh PAHZ* (pop. 654,713), is the largest city and the actual capital of Bolivia. The legal capital is Sucre. But most government buildings are in La Paz.

The city is also the center of trade, industry, and culture.

La Paz, located 12,795 feet (3,900 meters) above sea level, is the highest capital in the world. It lies in the valley of the La Paz River on the *altiplano* (high plateau) of western Bolivia. See **BOLIVIA** (picture; map).

The snow-capped peaks of the Andes Mountains tower above the city. Skiers speed down the world's highest ski run, over 17,000 feet (5,180 meters) above sea level, on the slopes of nearby Mount Chacaltaya.

Activities in La Paz center around a square called the Plaza Murillo. The National Palace, the Congress Building, and a cathedral surround the plaza. The city has many churches, some dating from the 1500's. Educational institutions include the University of San Andrés and the American Institute. Factories in and around La Paz produce such products as beer, canned foods, cigarettes, cement, glass, and textiles.

Spanish colonists led by Alonso de Mendoza founded La Paz in 1548. They named it *La Ciudad de Nuestra Señora de La Paz* (The City of Our Lady of Peace). In 1827, the city took the name of *La Paz de Ayacucho* (The Peace of Ayacucho). This name commemorates the 1824 Battle of Ayacucho which ended Spanish control of Bolivia and Peru. In 1898, most government offices moved from Sucre to La Paz. HAROLD OSBORNE

LAPIDARY is the cutting and polishing of gems. The word *lapidary* also refers to a person who does this work. Professional lapidaries flourished in Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt more than 6,000 years ago.

Gems may be cut in several ways. Different machines and techniques are used, depending on the type of stone being cut. For example, lapidaries cut some stones in a style called *cabochon*, with a rounded top and a flat bottom. Many gems, such as diamonds, are cut so they have numerous flat, polished *facets* (surfaces). Lapidary also includes the carving and engraving of gems.

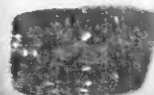
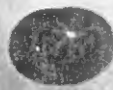
Professional lapidaries have traditionally kept their methods secret. During the 1920's in the United States, several men who collected gems as a hobby decided to learn how to cut and polish their own stones. They



Jadeite Ornament

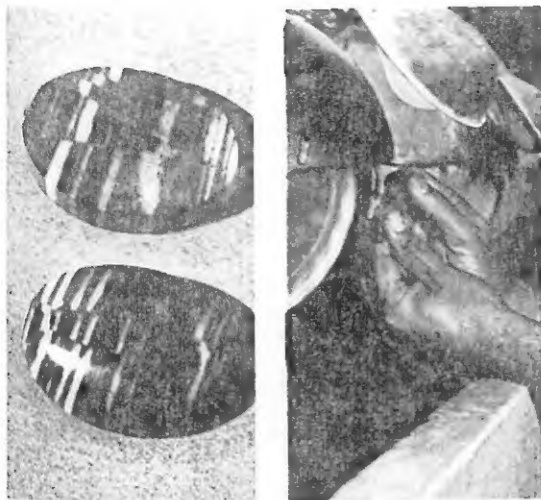


Agate Cameo Brooch

Golden Sapphire
Faceted cutBlue Star Sapphire
Cabochon cut

Lizardro Museum of Lapidary Art (WORLD BOOK photo)

Examples of Lapidary Art show how gems can be cut and polished in different styles. Lapidaries carved the ornament and brooch and used electrically powered tools to shape the sapphires.



Lizardro Museum of Lapidary Art (WORLD BOOK photos)

A Stone is polished on a lapidary wheel, right. The picture on the left shows how a piece of dolomite looks before and after it has been shaped and polished. The lapidary cuts the stone into an oval shape with a saw and then grinds and polishes it.

built equipment and developed techniques by trial and error. Amateur lapidary soon became a popular hobby. Today, there are many amateur lapidary clubs, some of which have groups for teen-agers. But most diamond cutting is done by professionals because of the special machines and methods involved.

PANSY D. KRAUS

See also **DIAMOND**; **GEM**.

LAPIS LAZULI, *LAP* is *LAZ* *yu* *lye*, is a beautiful azure-blue mineral whose color makes it valuable as an ornament. The mineral is sometimes called *lazurite*. Lapis lazuli consists chiefly of aluminum, sodium, silica, and sulfur. The mineral occurs in masses of fine grains and in crystals. Most of these deposits are in beds of limestone. Lapis lazuli sometimes is flecked with brilliant, shining spots. These spots are pyrite, which is an iron sulfide, and they help to identify genuine lapis lazuli.

The Egyptians used this mineral in their jewelry. So did the Romans, who called it "sapphire," a name now confused with a more valuable jewel. Lapis lazuli was once the only source of ultramarine, a blue pigment used in artists' paints (see **ULTRAMARINE**). This pigment is now made chiefly by chemical methods.

Ancient peoples believed that this mineral had medicinal value. They ground lapis lazuli stones to a powder, which they mixed with milk. The mixture was used as a dressing for boils and ulcers. The best specimens of lapis lazuli come from Afghanistan.

FREDERICK H. POUGH

See also **GEM** (color picture).

LAPITH. See **CENTAUR**.

LAPLACE, *lah* **PLAHS**, **MARQUIS DE** (1749-1827), **PIERRE SIMON DE LAPLACE**, a French astronomer and mathematician, became famous for his theory regarding the origin of the solar system. In his *Exposition of the System of the Universe* (1796), he started with a theoretical primitive nebula. He believed that this huge, lens-shaped cloud of gas rotated, cooled, contracted, and threw off planets and satellites. The remaining matter formed the sun. Laplace's nebular hypothesis was accepted for a long time, but has now been replaced by

other theories. However, scientists still have not solved the problem. See **EARTH** (How the Earth Began).

Laplace also contributed studies in mathematical astronomy. Sir Isaac Newton had satisfactorily explained movements of the solar system in general. But certain problems were not solved because no one in Newton's time had devised the necessary mathematical tools. Laplace accounted for the intricacies in the movements of the heavenly bodies. In *Celestial Mechanics* (1798-1825), he summed up the achievements in theoretical astronomy from the time of Newton.

Laplace was born at Beaumont-en-Auge, France, the son of a farmer. He became a professor of mathematics in Paris at the age of 20.

EDWARD ROSEN

LAPLAND, *LAP* land, lies in the extreme northern part of Europe, above the Arctic Circle. The region is called Lapland because it is the home of a small, sturdy people known as the Lapps. But it does not form a



WORLD BOOK map

Location of Lapland



Vagn Hansen, Black Star

Lapp School Children live in these wooden pyramid huts near the school. Many students come from far away to attend school.